

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
SECSTATE WASHDC 5969

S E C R E T CAIRO 1708

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCLR EG VS

SUBJECT: GOE REQUEST FOR HELP IN OVERFLIGHT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

REF: SAIGON 4000

1. I MUCH APPRECIATE AMBASSADOR MARTIN'S THOUGHTFUL SUGGESTION IN WHAT I KNOW IS AN AWKWARD SITUATION ALL AROUND. GIVEN CURRENT GOE SENSITIVITY, I CANNOT BE SURE WHETHER FAHMY WILL FEEL ABLE TO ACCEPT SUCH AN IDEA. NEVERTHELESS, PROPOSING IT HERE WITH GVN AGREEMENT WOULD (A) DEMONSTRATE TO GOE OUR WILLINGNESS TO BE HELPFUL, (B) SHOW THAT GVN, CONSISTENT WITH ITS NATIONAL DIGNITY, IS SEEKING PRACTICAL WAYS OF DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EGYPT, AND (C) PLACE ONUS OF ACCEPTANCE OF REJECTION SQUARELY ON GOE. FAHMY MAY ON THE SURFACE BE EXPECTED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT ANY SUCH CONDITIONAL GVN OFFER, BUT AS AN EGYPTIAN HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE DOCTRINE OF COMPENSATORY ADVANTAGE.

2. OFFER MIGHT BE MADE A BIT MORE APPEALING TO GOE IF INITIAL TIME PERIOD WERE SIX RATHER THAN THREE MONTHS, SUBJECT TO RENEWAL AFTER CONSULTATION. PROFITABILITY OF EGYPTAIR FLIGHTS TO THE FAR EAST MIGHT BE THEN BE MORE DEMONSTRABLE, THEREBY INTENSIFYING PRESSURE WITHIN THE GOE TO FIND SOME MEANS OF CONTINUING THESE PRIVILEGES.

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HOWEVER, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT AS FAR AS GOE IS

CONCERNED, ECONOMICS REMAIN SUBORDINATE TO POLITICS.

3. I CANNOT OF COURSE EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT GOE WILL AT END OF INITIAL PERIOD AGAIN ASK US TO INTERCEDE. IF WE COULD GET AN INITIAL SIX MONTHS PERIOD AND BE AUTHORIZED BY THE GVN TO PROPOSE IT TO THE GOE, I WOULD SUGGEST I ALSO BE INSTRUCTED TO MAKE TWO ADDITIONAL POINTS: FIRST, SUCH OVERFLIGHT PRIVILEGES WILL BE IMMEDIATELY REVOKED BY GVN IF SO CALLED PRG OR ITS OFFICE IN CAIRO SEEKS PUBLICLY TO TAKE CREDIT FOR IT, HENCE IT IS INCUMBENT ON GOE TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO MUZZLE LOCAL PRG OFFICE FROM ATTEMPTING TO DO SO. THIS MIGHT BRING HOME TO GOE THE CONTINUING LIABILITY OF HAVING SUCH PRG OFFICE HERE. SECOND, ON USG BEHALF THAT THIS HAS BEEN AN AWKWARD AND DIFFICULT EFFORT FOR US AND THAT WE MUST NOW LOOK TO GOE TO WORK OUT ITS OWN PERMANENT SOLUTION WITH GVN IN ANY MANNER THAT IS MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TO THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. EILTS

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NNN

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